The Computer Rag

Local Gossip

June Meetings: will be held on the second Wed., June 12, and the **fourth** Tues., June 25, both at 6 p.m. in OEC (top floor of Barracks C). The Wed. meeting may feature a project management demonstration. As for the Tues. meeting --**Notice the date change!** We are trying to get a representative from DODS (DoD Schools) to talk about computer education programs. At the time of printing, details were not confirmed, but members are encouraged to round up any and all interested parents for this special program. For more details, call 234-4326.

Last Month: Several people were confused about the Tues. meeting, showing up on the 14th instead of the 21st. Please send your complaints to the Vatican, which instituted the current calendar system.

As for the meetings themselves, on May 8 Sherman Standiford gave an extensive, well-balanced presentation on the Commodore-64, outlining its strengths and weaknesses, concluding that it was an excellent, inexpensive system for people who weren't certain if they really wanted a computer. Among other things, Standiford demonstrated a word processor he got for around $25 that performs very much like a Wang dedicated word processor.

On May 21 Clay Davis covered the exotic world of Apple copy protection, demonstrating several backup packages. Shy and reserved as always, he also praised AppleWorks, the Apple IIe, and computers in general. There was also extensive discussion of how disks are written, how to back up disks (and why), and how to properly use write protect tabs. Those present at both meetings agreed a backup program demonstrated by Staniford had the most obnoxious visual display, but Davis had one which ran a very close second.

July Preview: actually, we have no idea what the club will be doing in July. The President and Newsletter Editor will be very busy with biomedical research from roughly July 10 onward, and suggest club members start planning now if they want any presentations in July.

A-33 is now carrying IBM PC software.

Semi-Local Stuff

Multi-tasking and windows will be required on micros under a draft proposal from the Naval Aviation Logistics Command. The micros would be used in a massive office automation project, helping fly desks, apparently.
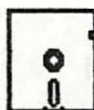
Zenith Stuff

Rumors: someone is going around saying all kinds of bad things about the Zenith Z-100s the Navy is buying. Among the more popular rumors: 1) Zenith is no longer making the Z-110 and Z-120; 2) the Zenith factory has burned down, and no computers of any kind are being made; 3) the contract has expired and no computers are available; 4) it is easier/ better/ cheaper to get IBM, Wang, or DEC; 5) Zenith has failed to live up to the contract and is way, way behind; 6) the Navy is buying Z-150s now instead of Z-120s.

NARDAC Norfolk, which administers the contract, says all of this is false. Z-110 and 120 machines are still being made, the factory did not burn down, the contract was renewed, etc. The Navy (not Zenith) has managed to slow down deliveries, but new procedures should shorten the wait. While the Navy **is** buying Z-150 machines, these machines can be ordered only if you need Tempest-certified equipment, otherwise you should stick to the Z-120. Finally, both the Navy and GSA frown upon purchase of IBM and Wang microcomputers; in certain instances such purchase may be allowed, but you better know what you are doing when the auditors come. Zenith Z-120s **are** the accepted standard, **not** IBM or Wang machines. NARDAC Norfolk will be more than happy to answer any other questions.

Zenith is now selling Morrow's Pivot II, an IBM compatible portable computer, as the Z-171. It uses an 80C88 processor, has two 5.25" disk drives, and an illuminated LCD display. They have also released three new models of their Z-150, two inexpensive versions (intended as "smart terminals" in network settings) and a "turbo" version which can run at 8 MHz. Finally, they have added the Z-200, which is an IBM PC-AT clone with extras. Selling at $3995 with one 1.2Mbyte floppy drive or $5,599 with an added 20Mbyte hard disk, it comes with MSDOS 3.1 and Xenix, and operates 30% faster than the AT.

Mitsui is making Zenith's new ZD-150, the first notebook computer to use Microsoft Works: a subset of Word, File, and Multiplan, with an enhanced BASIC, Telcom (a telecommunications package), and an appointment calendar, all in a 224K ROM. It has an 80x16 LCD screen, and with 32K of RAM (expandable to 416K) retails for $1195.

Perks is a new desktop utility for the Z-110 and 120. It costs $99.97 (.97?) and includes a calculator which allows hex conversions; a perpetual

appointment calendar for the 20th century; an ASCII table; help screens; screen saver (turns off Z-100 video if not used in a certain amount of time), a notepad; and a file utility.

CDR Systems has a $49.95 kit that boosts the Z-100 from 5 MHz to 7.5 MHz. It allegedly works with 8087 math chips, too.

Software Wizardry has a kit which allows 640K of RAM on the Z-150 or 768K on a Z-100 motherboard -- no expansion slots are needed.

Colorworks is offering a $49 version of Logo for the Z-100.

D.E.L. has come out with Gemini, an emulator board which allows the Z-100 to run unmodified IBM PC software. Another company is rumored to be working on a board which allows an IBM PC to run Z-100 software.

Borland Intl. has released Turbo Pascal 3.0 for $69.95, and a $54.95 high resolution graphics package for the Zenith Z-100 and IBM PC.

Graphics Pad -- the April **Byte** has a project to attach a Koala graphics pad to the Zenith Z-100 for under $180 (pp.120-121).

Microsoft Word has been released for the Zenith Z-100.

[Incidentally, this entire newsletter was written with Microsoft Word on the Macintosh.]

Non-Local Gossip

MicroPro claims there are 1.25 million legal copies of WordStar, and at least that many illegal copies. MicroPro plans to release a Mac version of WordStar 2000 before July.

Davong, a leading maker of hard disk drives for Apple and IBM computers, has filed for Chap. 11.

Columbia Data, makers of an excellent line of IBM PC clones, has also filed for Chap. 11.

Microsoft -- has purchased manufacturing rights to Appleworks.

Corporate Macs: Increasing numbers of large firms and organizations are buying Macintosh computers. Even though they are not "IBM PC compatible," they cost much less in the long run because they are much easier to learn and support.

DRI's GEM is being sold retail for $49 for the IBM PC. Users say this is a good price -- GEM uses up memory, makes the machine run slower, and doesn't do anything, but it DOES look good. DRI claims to have released a Mac-style Paint and word processing program, but very few dealers have ever seen copies.

General Computer Co. may sell its Hyperdrive to Apple. Hyperdrive is a 10Mbyte 3.5" hard disk that fits inside a Macintosh.

Digital Equipment has developed the MicroVAX II, possibly the most powerful desktop-size machine ever. Priced at $23,000, it can be used by 20 users

simultaneously and comes with 1Mbyte of memory. It has the same processing power as a VAX 11/780, though input/output is less impressive.

XYZZY is an undocumented MSDOS command on some versions of MSDOS. Try it. The command should sound familiar if you have ever played Original Adventure.

Golfers and Hackers -- fellow criminals? See the **Byte** April 1985 editorial, p.6.

IBM has announced desktop versions of their Series 1 and Series 36 minicomputers, and is working on a desktop 4300 mainframe. Seeing these large machines shrunk to desktop size should give you some idea of where IBM thinks computers should go.

Epson printers will no longer be sold by IBM. Big Blue is pushing its own $549 ProWriter, a 200 cps dot matrix printer, and its $745 Color Jetprinter, a seven color inkjet printer. This is all part of a big "buy American" push, but the printhead for the ProWriter is made by Epson, and the inkjet printer looks suspiciously like Canon's.

Topview, IBM's poorly received "window" software, has an entire, unused programming language buried inside it. With a few changes, some believe it could replace MSDOS [the IBM PC operating system] entirely.

Olivetti is already building AT&T's PC 6300 (an IBM PC clone), and is now building Xerox's 6064 and 6065 machines -- essentially the same thing as the 6300 PC.

AT&T is adding 512K RAM, a 10Mbyte hard disk, and an 8087 math chip to the PC 6300 and calling it the PC+.

Xerox has introduced a $4500 laser printer which can also be used as a photocopy machine.

Computerland Owner and Chairman Bill Millard may soon be much poorer. A law suit, fighting its way through the court for the past several years, has received a final verdict, and Millard has been ordered to give some ex-partners and associates 20% of Computerland's stock, $125 million in punative damages, $11 million in attorneys fees, and $5 million in dividends and interest. Millard had to post a $283 million bond before he could appeal the verdict -- and couldn't find anyone willing to loan him the money. [An unpaid loan, incidentally, started the suit.] He finally got the bond by paying big bucks to Lloyds of London.

Innovative Software has dropped copy protection for its Smart Software series.

Western Automation Laboratories has developed the Dasch (Disk Acceleration Storage Control Hardware), a 500K to 2 Mbyte RAM disk for the Macintosh. It connects to either the modem or

printer port, and does not tie up the port. Prices start at $495.

Kodak has purchased Verbatim, the world's biggest diskette manufacturer. Kodak had been purchasing diskettes from Japan and selling them under their label with the slogan, "Trust your data memories to Kodak."

Apple sales for the past six months have topped $1 billion.

Franklin's new machine, the Ace 2000, will be out this fall. It will use the FDOS-2 operating system (up to 10 times faster than DOS for reads and writes) and be IIe compatible.

Steve Jobs may not be at Apple much longer. Various rumors have him 1) enterting politics; 2) being sacked by stockholders for opposing expansion slots on the II, IIe, IIc, Mac, etc., as well as opposing further development of the Apple II line; 3) being sacked by AT&T after it buys Apple; 4) quitting to devote time to getting his drivers license back (taken away for speeding and DWI); 5) all of the above.

Assimilation has released a $79 MacPort Adapter that plugs into the printer port and allows the port to be used as either a serial or parallel port. They also have the Numeric Turbo Touch, a unit combining a trackball with numeric and cursor keys, for $149.

Atari's 520ST has been released with a list price of $799-900 (sources disagree) including one 360K drive and high-res monitor. Atari will sell the machine through computer specialty stores, not mass market chains. It is being manufactured in Taiwan. Someone want to get one in Hong Kong, cheap?

Apple Mac XL, formerly the Lisa, has been dropped. Steve Jobs claims this is because Apple ran out of parts and couldn't build anymore . . .

Microsoft will release Excel on the 512K Mac in Sept. for $395. It combines "the world's best spreadsheet" with graphics and a data base. There is a unique upgrade plan: owners of Multiplan can buy Exel for $200, and owners of both Chart and Multiplan pay just $100.

Paladin Software (which absorbed VisiCorp) has announced Crunch, a $295 Mac spreadsheet with graphics, data management, and note-keeping functions. This is Paladin's first product, and it will be pitted against both Excel and Lotus' Jazz, so early sales are not expected to be impressive.

Mosaic Software has released The Twin, a $145 non-copy protected program that does everything Lotus 1-2-3 does, and accepts 1-2-3 files.

Commodore, for the first time since entering the home computer market., has posted a quarterly loss (of $20.8 million). They expect a net loss for the year.

Magnum Software has come out with two products you just gotta get. One is Gypsy, the Computer Oracle, which looks suspiciously like an Ouija board. Sold separately (but included with Gypsy) is Mouse Mover, a small platform with "99 plated ball bearings for the feel of power steering." Both products are for the Mac.

Oliver's Story.